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Tracking Down Titles

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Tracking Down Titles

The ground on which Butler's Capitol stood is now occupied by valuable Iowa City property — Whetstone's Drug Store, the Western Union, and the Hawkeye Book Store.

On October 19, 1842, Butler sold the eastern third of Lot 6, plus a piece along the northern border to Thomas J. Robinson and John P. Myers. On January 3, 1842, before he obtained the patent to the land, Butler had used the remainder of the lot as security for a mortgage from Robert M. Secrest for \$2,130.90 in four notes, all due on June 1, 1842. There is no evidence of extension or renewal of this loan. On January 3, 1843, Butler assigned to Stewart R. and William A. Drury so much of this mortgage "as was made to secure the largest promissory note" to Secrest.

After devious court proceedings the land finally came into possession of Frederick Sanxay on March 16, 1848. Sanxay established an iron works and hardware store on it in 1850. On February 9, 1859, Sanxay sold the land to Theodore Sanxay, who mortgaged the property back to Frederick Sanxay for \$6,000 the same day. This sum was due and paid in 1862.

The Whetstone site was sold to Peter A. Dey

in 1893, whose heirs held it until 1948, when it was sold to William O. Byington and Everett O. Moss. These men had acquired the Whetstone Drug Store from Robert Whetstone, whose father had moved his drug store into Sanxay's vacated hardware store about 1876.

The Western Union site was sold to Samuel H. Sperry in 1858. Sperry sold this property to Morgan Reno, whose banking house of Culbertson and Reno had stood just east of the Sperry property. Upon Morgan Reno's death in 1869 his wife Margaret inherited the former Sperry property. She willed it to her son and daughter upon her death. In 1930 Reno Hohmann, Morgan Reno's grandson, leased it to the Western Union.

On May 7, 1862, Theodore Sanxay sold most of the land now occupied by the Hawkeye Book Store to Leopold and Seligman Rothschild. Two years later Moses Bloom acquired this property. In 1870 Theodore Sanxay sold the rest of the land to the rear of the Hawkeye Book Store to Moses Bloom, whose family retained possession of this combined property until June 30, 1914, when Sidney Bloom sold it to John Ries. In 1954 the Hawkeye Book Store bought the property.

Butler's Capitol, meanwhile, had been moved to South Dubuque Street where it stood (front cover) for years, a reminder of a public spirited man who brought the first legislature to Iowa City.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN